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SUBJECT: GENERALITAT TO OPEN OFFICIAL "DELEGATION" IN NEW YORK CITY

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The Catalan regional government plans to open an official "delegation" in New York city as early as October 30, 2009. Housed in Rockefeller Center, the new offices will bring together the various Catalan entities in the city under one roof and will be coordinated by a representative from Catalonia. In doing so, Generalitat officials hope to raise the Catalonia's profile in the United States and Canada, as well as with UN organizations. Catalonia Vice President Josep Carod-Rovira is expected to travel to the U.S. to inaugurate the new office. End summary.

¶2. (U) Roser Clavell, Secretary General of Foreign Affairs told CG September 9 the Generalitat (Catalonia's regional government) plans to extend its presence abroad this year by opening offices in New York city. According to Clavell, the new office will bring together under one roof the various offices the Generalitat has in the most prominent capital cities in the world. Who will head the delegation has not yet been decided. The Generalitat currently has offices in Paris, Berlin, Brussels, and London. There also plans to open offices in Buenos Aires and Mexico City, and Morocco. Catalonia has a number of offices to promote tourism, business, and the Catalan culture and art.

¶3. (SBU) Clavell lamented the fact that the world, in her words, only knows Catalonia through two ways, the diplomatic corps resident in Barcelona (good) and the national Spanish press (not so good). Clavell implied the Generalitat was not happy with its portrayal in the press and wanted to tell its own story. The new offices are a way of doing just that. The office in New York will be located at the Rockefeller Center and it is planned to be opened on October 30. Clavell will accompany Generalitat VP and Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) President Josep Carod-Rovira to New York for the inauguration. While being there, Clavell said officials are hoping to meet with New York Governor Patterson, participate in the opening of an exhibit on Catalan painter Joan Miro organized by MOMA, and attend UNESCO's linguistic university.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: Despite falling popularity at the polls, ERC leader Carod-Rovira is pressing ahead with his strategy of raising Catalonia's flag in the world's major cities. While it is not at all clear Catalans are happy seeing their taxes go to expensive offices in the most expensive cities around the world, especially since officials have recently claimed lack of resources to cover rising social and educational programs, the ERC is hoping regional pride will eventually win the day. One official close to Generalitat President Jose Montilla told CG recently the President has made the decision to systematically cut the Vice President's office out of foreign affairs. This latest move by Carod-Rovira could be a reaction to the President. Conversely, Carod's decision to open the New York office might have been the action that caused the President to

decide to start clipping the Vice President's wings. End
Comment.

ROBINSON